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17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

In the first three years of a ten-year program, surveys were taken, state personnel trained and plans were made for demonstrational and experimental projects. Ten such projects are in operation. Approximately 573 teachers are involved in the special projects with a total expenditure of over $68,000 for teacher education, instructional materials, additional personnel and testing. In the ten districts, 385 teachers are working on enrichment in the regular classroom. The remaining 188 are teaching special classes. Of this group, only 20 teach the gifted students on a full-time basis. Three of the 188 are community resource people who meet with special interest groups part-time. Of the 573 teachers, 14 are Negro. Each project is coordinated by a person at the local level. Approximately 2,541 students are participating in grades 1-12 with the major portion having an intelligence quotient of 120 or above. Each school district is conducting a different program of instruction for gifted students. Programs use full-time and part-time enrichment, ability groupings, cluster groups, non-graded classes, honors classes, advanced placement courses, interest groups, integrating subjects and special summer school enrichment courses.

Although much success in increased student and teacher productivity has been noted, problems were encountered in a need for better understanding and cooperation between administrators, teachers and parents. In-service training is recommended for teachers of the academically talented. Small classes and reduced teaching load is essential for proper teaching situations. Better planning by the State Department of Education and at the local level prior to the initiation of projects will help prevent later problems.

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GEORGIA'S

ACADEMICALLY TALENTED

PROJECT REPORT

Form: IEC-G-1
September, 1963

STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
State Office Building
Atlanta 3, Georgia

Division of Instruction
Services for Exceptional Children

Claude L. Purcell
State Superintendent of Schools

ACADEMICALLY TALENTED PROJECTS

PURPOSE OF REPORT

The primary purpose of this report is to share with you the present status of the academically talented demonstration projects. Presented in it are topics dealing with:

1. The development of Georgia's program for the academically talented

2. Observations and facts relating to the projects

3. Present outcomes of the projects

4. Future steps

BACKGROUND

The Georgia State Department of Education's Program for Academically Talented Students is now in its fifth year. A consultant in the area of the gifted joined the staff of the Unit, Services for Exceptional Children, in 1958. The first three years were spent in:

1. Surveying the state to determine the status of special programs for the academically talented;

2. Orienting State Department of Education, university, college, and public school personnel; as well as laymen as to the status of programs for the academically talented in the state and in the nation;

3. In-service training for State Department of Education personnel;

4. Developing plans for demonstration or experimental projects.

From July 1960, to July 1961, the consultant in the area of the gifted participated in the Southern Regional Education Board Project "Education of the Gifted". This was a training program designed to place within southern state departments of education one person informed as to the education of the gifted. As a participant in the project, the Department accepted the responsibility of developing a ten-year plan of action. This plan was developed by the consultant working with two committees — a state-wide committee composed of public school, state department and university people; and a State Department of Education Committee.

This plans supports a philosophy of education that recognizes the rights of individuals and the need for special programs for children who differ from most children. It allows for the development of a flexible state program with standards that can be adapted to meet the needs of the gifted enrolled in a metropolitan, urban, or rural school system. Flexible standards and a philosophy of education that supports differentiated instructional programs for children, allows for the utilization of selective grouping, acceleration, seminars, enrichment in the regular classroom, community resource people, team teaching, independent study, and other techniques found to be successful.

One of the first steps proposed in the ten-year plan was that of conducting demonstration or experimental programs. In order to carry this out, a plan for one demonstration project in each congressional district was presented to the State Board of Education and was approved by the Board in December 1960. It provides for a grant of $4,000 annually for a period of three years to one school system in each congressional district for the purpose of conducting a project.

For project purposes, academically talented students are defined as those students having an IQ of approximately 120 and above (which includes the gifted) on a standardized intelligence test and who have been determined capable of profiting for unusual academic challenges. These students then usually fall in the upper ten per cent of the school population.

At the April 1961 meeting of the Board, the State Department Committee presented ten projects for approval. Projects were approved in the districts and systems listed below:

District One - Savannah-Chatham County
District Two - Moultrie City
District Three - Muscogee County
District Four - Griffin-Spalding County
District Five - Fulton County
District Six - Washington County
District Seven - Floyd County
District Eight - Glynn County
District Nine - Gainesville City
District Ten - Clarke County

Each project is designed to:

1. Recognize the educational philosophy that exists in varying school systems;

2. Meet the needs of the academically talented found in a particular school system, or in a particular school or schools within a system;

3. Utilize the capabilities of faculties and community resource people;

4. Provide a sequentially developed program with differentiated curricula experiences for academically talented students;

5. Provide teacher training experiences in the area of the academically talented for teachers;

6. Provide means for experimenting with new media of learning.

The projects differ in nature as do the systems in which they are located. A brief description of each project may be found in the appendix of this report.

PRESENT STATUS, OBSERVATIONS, FACTS AND OUTCOMES

I. Project Personnel

Approximately 573 teachers are involved in special projects. Of this number, approximately 385 are working on enrichment in the regular classroom. The remaining 188 are teaching special classes. Of this group, only 20 teach the academically talented full time. Three of the 188 are community resource people who because of their special skills work a certain portion of the day with special interest groups. Of the 573 teachers, 14 are Negro teachers in the Griffin-Spalding School System.

Each project is coordinated by a person at the local level. Coordinators include six directors of curriculum; one director of guidance, counseling and testing; two school counselors; two assistant superintendents in charge of curriculum; one language arts coordinator; and one social studies coordinator. Forty-one principals supervise the project wihtin their respective schools. A total of 627 educators are involved in some way with the projects.

Approximately 2541 students in grades 1-12 are participating. The major portion of this number have an IQ of 120 and above. In several instances children are reported who have IQs below 120 but who have been placed in the program because of other factors such as high achievement test scores; high teacher grades; the need for balancing teacher pupil ratio; scheduling problems, especially at the secondary level; and special interests or talents of the students. Table I gives a break down of students according to IQ scores and grade levels. The figures reported are for the 1962-63 school year only.

Table I

DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS FOR SCHOOL YEAR 1962-63

IQ Ranges	Grades													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	Ungraded	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
120+			10	27	44	132	62	96	77	94	292	176	150	1160
115 - 119			4	10	5	32	3	9	3	53	63	35	36	253
90 - 114			16	8	28	79		29	22	85	28	32	42	369
TOTAL			30	45	77	243	65	134	102	232	383	243	228	1782*

*Approximately 750 students in the Glynn County School System are not listed in the above table as data on the students has not been completed.

FINANCIAL DATA

One of the criteria used for the selection of project systems was the projection of wise utilization of project funds. According to reports submitted to the consultant, funds are being spent wisely. The purposes for which funds have been used are indicated on Table II.

Table II

FINANCIAL DATA FOR GEORGIA'S ACADEMICALLY TALENTED PROJECT FOR 1962-63

System	Teacher Education			Instructional Materials	Additional Personnel	Testing	Total Spent From Grant
	Conferences Workshops Visitations	Consultative Help	Professional Materials		Teachers (part-time and full-time) Lay Readers Clerical Help		
Savannah Chatham	604.23	480.34	100.00	4675.03	398.00	300.00	6557.60
Moultrie City	692.04	1559.14	77.37	699.59	2228.00	88.50	5344.64
Muscogee County	1858.94	1406.99	574.14	222.70	2259.36	455.00	6777.13
*Griffin-Spalding	2148.70	1702.48	222.00	3138.07	376.00		7587.25
Fulton County	795.00	425.00	210.35	8100.80	340.00	113.04	9984.19
Washington County	166.32	241.70	5.00	2569.53	4761.00		7743.55
Floyd County	1451.49		2.00	834.15	105.00	28.90	2421.54
Glynn County	4605.00	1400.00	818.38	12.00	1500.00		8335.38
*Gainesville City	2398.59		270.14	4559.93	900.00	548.55	8677.21
Clark County				5231.00			5231.00
TOTAL	$24215.34			$30042.80	$12867.36	$1533.99	$68659.49

* Data reported as of September 15, 1963. All other data reported as of June 1, 1963.

PRESENT OUTCOMES

A review of progress reports submitted by project systems, observations by the State Department of Education, and by nationally known leaders in the education of the academically talented indicates that many desirable outcomes and needs are evident. The following section gives a listing of these:

1. A positive acceptance of the projects by educators, parents, and students is evident.

2. A greater understanding of the academically talented student and his needs is evident among the educators working with the projects. This has come about through in-service training, work with leading authorities, and attendance at national and state conferences, college courses, professional readings, and actual experiences with groups of academically talented students.

3. Experimentation is under way with new and differentiated instructional materials and media. Programmed learning materials in reading and study skills are being used in two systems. The Greater Cleveland Math Program is in use in one system. Other project systems are giving consideration to experimentation with new media during the 1963-64 school year. The humanities films have been purchased for use at the secondary level in two systems. Paperback materials for reference purposes and for instructional purposes are in use in several systems.

4. A greater flexibility in the use of materials ordinarily used with students is evident. The concept of graded materials appears to be disappearing, which is helping to bring about continuous progress for students and ungraded instructional programs.

5. Extensive consideration is being given to the ways in which students are graded.

6. A greater awareness of features that reflect quality programs for the academically talented exist in each school system. Differentiation and quality rather than quantity and repetition are becoming very evident.

7. Articulation and coordinated planning between levels of education are evident in most project systems.

8. Better use of records kept on students is evident, as well as more extensive record keeping of meaningful data.

9. An increased awareness of the need for evaluating present curricula offerings for the academically talented exists in all project systems.

10. Better utilization of school staffs is evident.

11. Community resource people are in use in several systems.

12. More flexibility in the placement of students for instructional purposes is in practice.

13. A high motivation for learning appears to be evident in all project systems.

14. Evidence exists to show that academic growth and creativity among project participants are high.

15. Little evidence of snobbishness appears to be present in project participants.

16. In some systems awareness of the need to provide for the pre-school academically talented child is evident.

Present observations and reports seem to indicate positive values or outcomes for project systems and for project participants. However, problems do exist because certain needs within systems have not been fully met. It is highly possible that as needs are met these problems will disappear and positive outcomes emerge. Reports and observations indicate that there is a need for:

1. Better understanding on the part of some administrators (including principals and superintendents) as to the nature and needs of the academically talented and differentiated programming for them. This lack of understanding has handicapped coordinators in the planning of conferences and in the wise use of funds. In a few instances, it has also brought about the scheduling of students to project groups who because of many factors cannot profit from participation in the groups.

2. A teacher education program for those planning to work with the academically talented. In most cases it has been necessary for a great deal of time to be spent in preparing teachers to work with project groups. Preparation periods have included study in the academic areas and in the nature of programs for the academically talented. The need for at least six weeks of study in the nature and needs of the academically talented prior to beginning work with such a group is evident.

3. Better understanding on the part of parents and students as to the nature of programs for the academically talented. In some cases poor understanding of the program and its purposes has brought about pressure to place children in the program who cannot profit from participation. Some parents and students look upon the program as a social status builder.

4. Release time for teachers teaching the academically talented. Many systems reported that in the final analysis the lack of time for teacher preparation is proving to be a handicap in the development of a quality program. With more time a teacher lacking background in academic content and teaching techniques can become better prepared to teach the academically talented. Research and observation show that teachers of the academically talented need at least two free periods a day for preparation.

5. Release time for coordinators. Coordinators need enough time to see that all duties assumed can be carried out efficiently, especially those that deal with program planning and evaluation and with teacher education. In some instances coordinators have not been given sufficient time to carry out project activities, thus little change is taking place in the curricula activities offered the academically talented.

6. A criteria for the selection of teachers of the academically talented. It is thought by many working in the field that state departments should develop criteria to be used in the selection of teachers of the academically talented. Criteria should include previous teaching experience with normal children and the completion of at least three courses dealing with the education of the academically talented. The absence of such standards tends to lead to the placement of available (but not always qualified) teachers with academically talented children.

7. Standards and procedures for evaluating the academic growth of academically talented students. In many instances the academically talented are penalized in terms of grades when placed in special programs. When this happens students request to be removed from the program in order to maintain A and B grades. This is especially true in systems where no distinction is made in the grading of students who differ.

8. Clerical assistance for project coordinators. In order to collect the data necessary to adequately evaluate projects and make recommendations for the continuation of a program for the academically talented, it is necessary to ask that several forms and records be completed and filed with the Unit, Services for Exceptional Children. Because of this, the need for continuous contact with project teachers and the need for preparing materials for in-service, some clerical assistance for project coordinators is considered desirable.

9. A reduced teacher-pupil ratio. In order to keep teacher pupil ratios balanced throughout the school or system, it has, in some instances, been necessary to place children who do not meet the criteria for entrance in the special project into project groups. This has resulted in large over crowded classrooms. High teacher pupil ratios have reduced the amount of time teachers can devote to individualized instruction and project activities. Teachers allotted over and above the regular ADA allottment could help to relieve this need.

10. Policies that relate to identification and placement of the academically talented. More clearly defined procedures to follow in the identifying and placing of students in special programs outlined and approved by the State Board of Education could bring about better identification programs and prevent the placement of students in special programs who, because of many factors, should not be in it.

11. Additional funds for instructional materials, teaching personnel, and teacher training. The selection and availability of each of these would be greater and more efficiently brought about if additional funds for each were available. Many curricula experiences for the academically talented are built around ideas and require the use of many instructional aids, especially library and reference materials. The present allottment for projects does not begin to adequately finance any one of the three items mentioned above, much less provide the instructional materials needed.

12. Better planning by the State Department of Education and at the local level prior to the initiation of projects. Some of the problems and needs mentioned above possibly could have been prevented with better planning prior to the beginning of projects. However, many of the needs and problems did not become evident until after they were under way.

FUTURE STEPS

Plans are under way to continue the projects for the 1963-64 school year, which will be considered a year of evaluation. Plans include the examination of the following aspects of programs for the academically talented, especially as they relate to the ten projects and to the State of Georgia.

I. Utilization of funds allotted for demonstration projects as related to aspects of educational programs for the academically talented such as:

   A. Teacher education and growth;

   B. Instructional materials and media;

   C. Identification of academically talented;

   D. Utilization of regular school staff and of community resource people;

   E. Curricula experiences given gifted students.

II. Aspects of project participants behavior such as:

   A. Standardized achievement test scores of students;

   B. Specific aspects of behavior related to identified abilities or interest;

C. Teacher grades based on results obtained from teacher made test;

D. General attitudes of teachers, parents, administrators and students toward projects and special programs.

In addition to the data collected from project systems, a state-wide survey designed to determine the status of programs for the academically talented in school systems other than project systems will be conducted. Included in the survey will be college programs for the academically talented. Recommendations for future action by the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education will be based upon obtained results and will be made to the State Board of Education.

Since each project is designed to meet the needs of a particular school system, or a particular school within a system; and since each project plan includes specific objectives and evaluation procedures that relate to the type of project and the objectives set forth, no attempt will be made to compare one project with another. Instead, the final report will include:

1. A complete description of the project as conducted and evaluated at the local level;

2. A complete report of the activities of the State Department;

3. Recommendations based upon data collected and summarized by the State Department of Education.

APPENDIX I

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Data reported as of the close of the 1962-63 school year.

District One

System: Savannah-Chatham County

This project is designed to follow a non-graded approach to learning which provides a planned program of acceleration for primary academically talented students. Children participating in the project are identified as soon as possible after they enter school. Acceleration takes place after an individual psychological evaluation has been made on each child being considered for placement in the program. New approaches to learning such as an individualized reading program and new instructional materials such as the Greater Cleveland Math Program are two of the curricula features of this program. During the 1962-63 school year, 65 children and four teachers participated in the program. Thirty-three students in their third year of school completed the fourth grade. Thirty-two students in their second year of school completed the third grade. Future plans for this project include the continuation of a non-graded primary program in two project schools and the initiation of a similar program in other schools in the system. These plans are based on existing evidence in the system which indicates that the present project is achieving the objectives for which it was organized. They are also based on results reported in previous studies of acceleration done in other areas of the nation which indicate that planned acceleration for the academically talented can be more beneficial than harmful.

District Two

System: Moultrie City

This project features a winter and a summer program for the academically talented. The winter program involves only students enrolled in grades nine through twelve in the Moultrie City Schools. The summer program includes students enrolled in grades five through nine in the Moultrie City School System and in the Colquitt County School System.

Students participating in the winter program are grouped according to their ability. Course work for these students features the use of advanced materials, creative writing, parallel readings in academic areas, independent research and independent experimentation. An experimental course in the humanities will be offered during the second semester of the 1963-64 school year. This course will be a part of the course in U.S. History. Academically talented students may also take three years of a foreign language. During the 1962-63 school term approximately 259 children participated in the project.

Approximately 190 students participated in the 1963 summer program which was one of enrichment rather than one of duplication of work offered during the regular school year. The students had an opportunity to develop a deeper and broader understanding of the humanities. Curricula activities for the 1963 summer session included a special literature course, art instruction and appreciation, typewriting, and a course in the history of religion. This program was well accepted by students, parents, and educators.

District Three

System: Muscogee County School District

This project is an expansion of a program which began in January 1960 at the Columbus High School. It offers three types of curricula activities. These are honors courses in English and mathematics, enrichment in the regular classroom, and the privilege of taking college courses while still enrolled in high school. During the 1963-64 school year the expansion will include honors courses in all academic subjects. Consideration is being given to expanding the projects to include all high schools in the school district.

District Four

System: Griffin-Spalding County

This project is an expansion of the junior and senior high school program which has been in operation for several years. Special language arts classes for sixth grade academically talented students are in operation in ten elementary schools. They hope to extend the program downward to include all fifth grade students. Academically talented junior high school and secondary students take courses one year in advance in mathematics, English, social studies, science, and foreign languages. This program provides them with the opportunity to take all college preparatory courses offered. Several new courses such as advanced mathematics, speech, English, and science will be available for seniors during the 1963-64 school year.

The academically talented project in the Griffin-Spalding School System also includes a special project for Negro students. Beginning with the fifth grade, this project emphasizes the language arts, especially reading skills and vocabulary development. At the secondary level curricula offerings emphasize special classes in reading, social studies, Spanish, and mathematics. They hope to extend the program downward to include all of the elementary grades.

District Five

System: Fulton County

This is a cooperative project coordinated by the language arts consultant and by the social studies consultant. The project centers around the humanities approach to instruction in social studies and English and emphasizes the continual reoccurance

of questions that have universal concern. Opportunities are provided for academically talented students to develop the habit of thoughtful evaluation of ideas, opinions, and values as well as efficient reading habits. Students participating in the reading program receive no grade for the course and usually meet prior to the beginning of the school day. Students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve participate in this project.

During the 1963-64 school year this project will include an advanced placement course in American History and Modern European History for selected students who completed the regular course offered during the 1962-63 school year. These students will be enrolled in a regular class but will also be expected to attend night seminars which will feature discussions lead by consultants in the social sciences from the colleges and universities in the area. Other course requirements will include independent study and advanced readings.

District Six

System: Washington County

Selected students in grades five, six, seven, and eight in the Sandersville and Tennile Elementary Schools are participating in special interest groups in typewriting, foreign languages, science, and art. Interest groups are taught by three community resource people who work as part-time teachers. With the exception of science and art, the groups meet twice a week for thirty minutes a day. Science and art are taught for one hour once a week. Participating students are allowed to select two of the interest groups. It is anticipated that:

1. Students who have had three years of typewriting will not need to take personal typewriting in high school;

2. Students who have had four years of conversational French upon entering high school will enroll in the second year French class rather than the first year French class;

3. Science students will not be required to take general science in the ninth grade but instead will be given the privilege of entering a tenth grade biology class.

District Seven

System: Floyd County

This project features cluster grouping of academically talented students in grades three, four, five and six in a nongraded program. Curricula activities are designed to challenge students toward self-direction, critical thinking, and the

discovery and utilization of abilities. This program provides for continuous growth and individualization of abilities. Consideration is being given to departmentalization and team teaching for students moving up in the program.

District Eight

System: Glynn County

This project features enrichment within the regular classroom and the placement of students in sections or groups where it is felt they can best function. The project is so designed to allow for experimentation with a broad interpretation of giftedness and for the participation of all teachers and schools in the system. Many varying and on-going activities are under observation and study. Some of these include:

1. The continuation of the development of a superior teaching staff through in-service training programs for new staff members, small group staff discussions on reading in the education of the gifted, and a mid-term workshop focused on some phase of giftedness or working with gifted students.

2. The conducting of research projects in individual schools. During the 1962-63 school year, two schools participated in a national study designed to evaluate the effectiveness of programmed learning on creativity. This study was conducted by Dr. E. Paul Torrance, Director of the Bureau of Educational Research, University of Minnesota. Participating schools were the C. B. Greer and the Goodyear Elementary Schools. A second research project in the early identification of gifted students was conducted at the St. Simons Elementary School. Seventy-seven pre-school students were tested at the beginning of the 1962-63 school year for mental ability and readiness for learning. Data was made available to teachers to assist them in planning for gifted first grade students.

3. The increasing of guidance services available to underachieving gifted senior high school students. One additional counselor was added to the guidance and counseling staff.

4. The completion of a study designed to serve as a basis for increasing remedial services to the gifted and to other students.

5. The completion and the utilization of special research facilities and laboratory space for use by interested and advanced students. A summer workshop for teachers placed in a new science and library building was held to determine efficient methods for instructing the gifted within the framework of the building.

6. The initiation of new classes and interest groups for gifted students such as a class in creative writing for students in grades ten, eleven, and twelve; a journalism class for students in grades seven, eight, and nine; and Algebra II for students in grade ten. The creative writing class meets at night and is supervised by an English teacher in the secondary school.

7. The releasing of one science and one English teacher from two hours of teaching duties for the purpose of coordinating the junior high school and senior high school programs in English and science.

8. The development of a more flexible placement program for high school students. Some students are now participating in a completely non-graded program.

9. The constant search for additional and appropriate instructional materials.

10. The employment of cluster grouping at the elementary level for instruction in art, creative writing, study skills, and music.

11. An increased demand for more and more professional materials for teachers. An up-surge in professional readings is evident.

District Nine

System: Gainesville City

This project is a coordinated project between one elementary school and the junior high school. It features semi-departmentalization and selected grouping on the basis of ability and achievement for grades four, five, and six in one elementary school. In grades seven and eight, special grouping on the basis of achievement is used in each subject. No variation of subjects or schedules for students in grade seven has been made. However, enrichment within ability groups is provided. The eighth grade schedule permits an academically talented student to take algebra and Latin. All curricula experiences provided for academically talented students in grades four through eight are of an advanced nature.

District Ten

System: Clarke County

This project features special classes in the language arts for academically talented students in grades nine through twelve. The classes are called educational enrichment classes. Enrollment in the classes is kept low. The curriculum in language arts is so designed that it emphasizes both breadth and depth. Future plans for project groups include the refinement and development of the language arts program along the lines of intensive experiences in the humanities.

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